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ABSTRACT

Results of a questionnaire survey of 24 reading teachers from selected junior colleges in the State of Mississippi are presented in 22 tables with comments, summary, and conclusion. The 22 data categories are (1) number of male and female reading teachers reporting, (2) age range of reading teachers, (3) number of years of experience in teaching, (4) the highest degree held, (5) major field of highest degree held, (6) number of students enrolled in various reading programs per teacher unit, (7) number of vocational/technical students enrolled in the reading programs per teacher unit, (8) opinions of the vocational reading teachers as to the separation of academic students and vocational students in reading, (9) methods utilized in selecting students for reading instructors, (10) regularity of discussion of students' reading between reading instructor and regular instructor, (11) reading level range of vocational students, (12) indications of the subject areas profiting most from reading instruction, (13) reading tests administered to vocational/technical students, (14) indications of when various reading tests were administered, (15) the person administering the reading test to vocational/technical student, (16) utilization of vocational/technical materials, (17) types of materials utilized in teaching reading, (18) utilization of vocabulary lists from content of vocational/technical programs, (19) scheduling of visual and/or auditory acuity tests, (20) suggestions and/or needs in program improvement for vocational/technical students in reading, (21) expenditure of funds for instructional materials, and (22) utilization of instructional materials. (HD)

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Vocational Reading Development Program

Analysis of Reading Teachers' Perceptions of the Reading Programs in Post-Secondary Vocational/ Technical Complexes in Mississippi

Frances A. Karnes Clyde N. Ginn

Research Project in Vocational Education
Conducted Under
Part C of Public Law 90-576

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Jackson, Mississippi

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Hattiesburg, Mississippi

CE 016 456

VOCATIONAL READING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

ANALYSIS OF READING TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE READING PROGRAMS IN POST-SECONDARY VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL COMPLEXES IN MISSISSIPPI

The project reported herein is being performed utilizing funds made available to the State of Mississippi under provisions of Part C of Public Law 90-576 administered by the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

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Sponsored by
Vocational-Technical Division
Mississippi State Department of Education
and
University of Southern Mississippi

June, 1976

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INTRODUCTION

Two-year colleges are springing up all over this country and have been referred to as one of the most dynamic, moving forces of this decade. The old concept "two years of general education and two years of specialized education" is being strongly challenged. In its place is coming vocational and technical education. In some places this demand produces problems that the already existent reading programs are not very well equipped to handle. Reading instructors in these programs are grasping for the knowledge and capability to meet the varied demands for reading training.

In many instances it is dubious as to whether or not materials adequately meet the reading needs of students who are in the broad spectrum of educational programs. Many adults do not develop skills necessary for truly independent reading. While they may experience success at first, too often they remain unable to progress to more difficult reading material because they lack the means to unlock words that have not been directly taught to them.

Often reading programs for the junior college student who is experiencing difficulty with the reading task are set up along the same guidelines as the junior or senior high school remedial reading program. By this time the student has lost

much of his motivation to even attempt this by now dull, unrewarding task. It seems worth considering the point that the reading problems of junior college students in the vocational and technical programs might be more adequately solved or reduced if materials not only met their interests but were of a reading level commensurate with their actual independent reading levels as well as instructional levels.

Many previously successful methods of teaching reading have not worked with the student in the vocational and technical school reading courses. These students' primary needs are not rate training or extension of study skills. Rather, they usually are in need of general reading improvement. This student reader differs from his student counterparts in certain specific ways. Perhaps each of these needs to be taken into consideration if experiences in reading instruction for the vocational and technical students are to be productive.

Finch (1969) pointed out that more than half of two-year college students are in need of remedial or "compensatory" programs. Feurs (1970), studying the relationship of reading comprehension scores (Davis and Nelson Denny Tests) to achievement of junior college students in eight different curriculum areas, found significant differences among the areas for each of the reading comprehension measures; significant differences between males and females were in general not found; significant relationships between vocabulary scores and grade point average were also found.

In considering the readability of particular texts, one must consider the appropriateness of the texts to the reader's purpose in reading and his interest and background in the subject matter. Dale and Chall (1948) pointed this out in commenting on the application and interpretation of their readability formula:

> to say that a given article . . . is comfortable reading for average adults because it has a predicted grade level of VII-VIII is giving an incomplete picture. For readers who have no interest or no background (in the subject) the article will probably not be comfortable reading.

Procedure

Data Analyzation

Twenty-four reading teachers from selected junior colleges in the State of Mississippi returned completed questionnaire forms; however, due to the nature of the data, some totals exceed the 24 total of returnees. As shown in Table 1, 25 percent of the reading teachers were male and 75 percent were female.

TABLE 1

THE NUMBER OF READING TEACHERS REPORTING AS TO MALE OR FEMALE

Sex	Number	Percentage
Male	6	25.00
Female	18	75.00
Total	24	100.00

The highest percentage of reading instructors was in the age range of 31 - 40 years of age, as shown in Table 2. The second highest number was in the range of 25 - 30 years of age.

TABLE 2

AGE RANGE OF READING TEACHERS

Age Range	Number	Percentage
25 - 30 yrs.	6	25.00
31 - 40 yrs.	9	37.50
41 - 45 yrs.	2	8.30
46 - 50 yrs.	3	12.50
Over 50 yrs.	4	16.70
Total	24	100.00

As shown in Table 3, the years of experience are varied, with experience being recorded in many facets of education. The years of experience are accumulative from 1 - 20 years by level of teaching. A substantial number (52 percent) had from 1 to 5 years of teaching experience on the junior college level, and 40 percent had 6 to 10 years of experience in junior college teaching.

TABLE 3

NUMBER OF YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN TEACHING
AS REPORTED BY READING INSTRUCTORS

Level	1 - 5 Years		6 - 10 Years		11 - 15 Years		16 - 20 Years		Over 20 Years		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Total %
Junior College	12	52	9	40	1	4	0	0	1	4	100.00
Senior High	7	78	2	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	100.00
Junior High	7	88	1	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	100.00
Elementary	8	67	1	8	1	8	2	17	0	0	100.00
*Other	9	90	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0	100.00

*"Other" includes from 1 year to 14 years spent teaching or working in a college reading clinic, Manpower Development training, special education teaching at a state school for the mentally retarded, math, supervising reading teachers, teaching reading in a four-year college, and teaching technical courses in the military.

Sixty-four percent of the reading teachers reported having a master's degree as their highest degree, and 28 percent reported the bachelor's degree as their highest degree as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4

THE HIGHEST DEGREE HELD BY READING TEACHERS

Degree	Number	Percentage
B.S., B.A.	7	28.00
M.S., M.A., M.Ed.	16	64.00
Ad. M.A.	2	8.00
Total	25	100.00

At the master's level, 27 percent of the reading instructors received this degree in reading as shown in Table 5. The second largest number, 3 (11 percent), of the reading instructors held the master's degree in secondary education. In addition, 11 percent also represents the number of reading instructors who held the bachelor's degree in secondary education and those who held this degree in vocational/ industrial and technical education. One of the reading instructors had a specialist's degree in reading.

TABLE 5

THE MAJOR FIELD AND THE HIGHEST DEGREE HELD BY READING INSTRUCTORS

Major	Specialist		Master's		Bachelor's	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Adult Education	0	0	1	4	0	0
Elementary Edu.	0	0	2	8	0	0
Music Education	0	0	0	0	1	4
Reading	1	4	7	27	0	0
Secondary Edu. (Math, Home Ec., Business)	0	0	3	11	3	11
Special Education	0	0	2	8	0	0
Voc./Ind. and Technical Edu.	0	0	1	4	3	11
*Non-teaching Areas	0	0	1	4	1	4
Subtotals	1	4	17	66	8	30
Total						100

*These include engineering and psychology.

A large percentage of the reading instructors had other responsibilities other than those responsibilities included in teaching reading (see Appendix B).

The number of students enrolled in the reading programs within the junior colleges varied considerably from junior college to junior college. As shown in Table 6, 5 percent of

the reading teachers had from 180-189 students, while the highest percentage (20 percent) of the reading instructors had from 40-49 students enrolled in reading.

TABLE 6

NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN VARIOUS READING PROGRAMS PER TEACHER UNIT

Number Students Enrolled in Reading	Number Teachers Teaching within Range	Percentage of Teachers
180 - 189	1	5.00
170 - 179	2	10.00
160 - 169	0	0.00
150 - 159	3	15.00
140 - 149	0	0.00
130 - 139	1	5.00
120 - 129	0	0.00
110 - 119	0	0.00
100 - 109	1	5.00
90 - 99	0	0.00
80 - 89	1	5.00
70 - 79	2	10.00
60 - 69	2	10.00
50 - 59	2	10.00
40 - 49	4	20.00
30 - 39	1	5.00
Total	20	100.00

Thirty percent of the reading teachers had from 1-20 vocational/technical students enrolled in the reading program, and 17 percent of the reading teachers had from 41-60 reading students; 17 percent of the reading teachers reported from 81-100 vocational/technical students enrolled in the reading program, as shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7

NUMBER OF VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE READING PROGRAMS PER TEACHER UNIT

Number of Vocational/Technical Students in Reading	Number of Reading Teachers	Percentage of Teachers
1 - 20	5	30.00
21 - 40	2	12.00
41 - 60	3	17.00
61 - 80	0	0.00
81 - 100	3	17.00
Over 100	2	12.00
No Estimate	2	12.00
Total	17	100.00

Sixty percent of the vocational reading teachers felt that academic and vocational students should be separated in the reading program as shown in Table 8. Approximately 40 percent

of the instructors felt that academic and vocational students should not be separated for reading instruction.

TABLE 8

THE OPINIONS OF THE VOCATIONAL READING TEACHERS AS TO THE SEPARATION OF ACADEMIC STUDENTS AND VOCATIONAL STUDENTS IN READING

	No.	Percentage
No	6	40.00
Yes	9	60.00
Total	15	100.00

In reference to the method used in selecting students for reading instruction, approximately 27 percent of the reading instructors stated that selection was based upon instructor request; also, 27 percent stated that selection was made by diagnostic pre-testing, as shown in Table 9. Eighteen percent of the instructors stated that students attended on a compulsory basis. The average class size is 26 students per instructor.

TABLE 9

METHODS UTILIZED IN SELECTING STUDENTS FOR READING INSTRUCTION

Basis for Selection	No.	Percentage
Vocational/Technical Subject Area	1	9.00
Compulsory	2	18.00
Counselor Recommendation	1	9.00
Instructor Request and Class Performance	3	27.50
No High School Diploma	1	9.00
Pre-testing	3	27.50
Total	11	100.00

As shown in Table 10, the regularity of discussion between the students' regular instructors and the reading teachers ranged from "more than once a week" to "never." Approximately 53 percent of the instructors discussed such problems based on student need. Less than 6 percent discussed reading problems more than once a week.

TABLE 10

REGULARITY OF DISCUSSION OF STUDENTS' READING BETWEEN READING INSTRUCTOR AND REGULAR INSTRUCTOR

Frequency per Semester	No.	Percentage
More Than Once a Week	1	5.90
Weekly	3	17.60
1 - 2 Times	2	11.80
Irregularly (Based on Student Need)	9	52.90
Never	2	11.80
Total	17	100.00

Based on data obtained from the reading instructor questionnaires, these instructors feel that the range of the reading levels of vocational students is from a first grade level through a second-year college level. This data is presented in Table 11 along with the number of classes of each responding instructor.

TABLE 11

READING LEVEL RANGE OF VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

No. of Classes	Reading Level Range
1	
1	
2	
1	
1	
1	
1	
1	
1	
1	
1	
2	

Reading Grade Level 1.0 2.0 3.0 4.0 5.0 6.0 7.0 8.0 9.0 10.0 11.0 12.0 13.0 14.0

In response to which students profited most from the reading programs, reading instructors felt that the auto mechanics students received the most benefit from the reading instruction. In addition, several other groups of students were believed to profit from this instruction, as shown in Table 12.

TABLE 12

INDICATIONS OF THE SUBJECT AREAS PROFITING MOST FROM READING INSTRUCTION

Vocational/Technical Area	No. of Teachers	Percentage
Auto Mechanics	4	33.33
Carpentry	1	8.33
Electronics	2	16.66
Law enforcement	1	8.33
Machine Shop and Welding	1	8.33
Nurse's Aide	1	8.33
Radio and T.V.	1	8.33
All Areas	1	8.33
Total	12	100.00

As shown in Table 13, the reading instructors indicated that different types of reading tests are administered to the vocational/technical students with combinations of various

tests being utilized in some instances. The greatest majority of instructors used general reading achievement tests. Other types used included word attack or word recognition tests, comprehension tests, and teacher made tests.

TABLE 13

READING TESTS ADMINISTERED TO VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL STUDENTS

Type of Reading Test	No.	Percentage
General Reading Achievement		
ABLE	3	13.00
American Achievement	1	4.00
California Achievement Test	1	4.00
Gates McGinitie (DEF)	2	9.00
Nelson Denny (ABCD)	1	4.00
RFU	3	13.00
SRA Diagnostic Reading	2	9.00
Tactics Diagnostic	2	9.00
Word Attack or Word Recognition		
Schnell's Word Reading	1	4.00
Wide Range Achievement Test	1	4.00
Word Clue Appraisal	2	9.00
Comprehension		
Iowa Silent Reading	2	9.00
Other		
Teacher Made	2	9.00
Total	23	100.00

The following table indicates that tests were administered at various times during the academic year. A testing program in which pre- and post-testing were done was used by the highest percentage of reading teachers.

TABLE 14

INDICATIONS OF WHEN VARIOUS READING TESTS WERE ADMINISTERED

Time	No.	Percentage
Orientation	1	11.00
Beginning of Training	1	11.00
Beginning of Quarter and after First 6 Weeks	1	11.00
Beginning and End of Semester	1	11.00
Pre- and Post-Testing	3	34.00
Once Every 6 Weeks	1	11.00
Total	9	100.00

Table 15 indicates that the majority of the reading tests were administered by the reading instructor, the remedial instructor, or the vocational/technical counselor. Others who had this responsibility included counselors and teachers from other aspects of the student's total instructional program.

TABLE 15

THE PERSON ADMINISTERING THE READING TEST TO VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL STUDENT

Person Administering	No.	Percentage
Reading Instructor	5	38.46
Remedial Instructor	3	23.08
Vocational/Technical Counselor	3	23.08
Other	2	15.38
Total	13	100.00

As shown in Table 16, approximately 55 percent of the reading teachers utilized materials from the vocational/technical subject areas of their students. The next highest percentage of teachers gave a response of "not applicable."

TABLE 16

UTILIZATION OF VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL MATERIALS

	No.	Percentage
Yes	17	54.84
Sometimes	3	9.68
No	5	16.13
Not Applicable	6	19.35
Total	31	100.00

It appears that the wealth of types of materials utilized by the reading teachers was obtained from various trade magazines from the students' various vocational/technical subject areas and textbooks. The trade magazines included such names as Popular Mechanics and Popular Electronics. Less than 6 percent of the materials were made by the teachers.

TABLE 17

TYPES OF MATERIALS UTILIZED IN TEACHING READING

Materials	No.	Percentage
Trade Magazines	3	17.65
Textbooks	13	76.47
Teacher-Made	1	5.88
Total	17	100.00

The majority of the teachers indicated that they did not use vocabulary lists drawn from the content of the vocational/technical programs. This may be due to a number of various reasons such as no composite vocabulary list being available for each subject area.

TABLE 18

UTILIZATION OF VOCABULARY LISTS FROM CONTENT OF VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

	No.	Percentage
Yes	6	24.00
Sometimes	4	16.00
No	15	60.00
Total	25	100.00

In response to the question as to whether or not visual and auditory acuity test were administered to the students enrolled in the reading programs, 73 percent of the teachers indicated that these types of tests were not scheduled on a regular basis. The remaining 27 percent of the teachers did not administer this type of testing.

TABLE 19

SCHEDULING OF VISUAL AND/OR AUDITORY ACUITY TESTS

	No.	Percentage
Sometimes Scheduled	19	73.00
Never Scheduled	7	27.00
Total	26	100.00

Reading instructors of vocational/technical students indicated that programs could be improved in various ways. Sixty percent of the instructors who responded indicated that more materials would improve the reading programs. An equal percentage of the remaining respondents indicated that both organization in scheduling and emphasis on content skills would prove beneficial in reading program improvement.

TABLE 20

SUGGESTIONS AND/OR NEEDS IN PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL STUDENTS IN READING

Suggestions	No.	Percentage
More Materials	6	60.00
Organization in Scheduling	2	20.00
More Content (Skills)	2	20.00
Total	10	100.00

Reading instructor expenditures varied as to the amount of money spent for reading materials, as shown in Table 21. Figures in the table are given as percentages of respondents.

TABLE 21

EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

	Percent in 1970-71	Percent in 1971-72	Percent in 1972-73	Percent in 1973-74	Total Percent
$501 - $1,000	15.00	31.00	23.00	31.00	100.00
$100 - $500	11.00	11.00	33.00	45.00	100.00
No Funds	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	100.00
Unknown	29.00	26.00	24.00	21.00	100.00

Reading instructors indicated that various types of materials were utilized in the teaching of reading to vocational and technical students, as shown in the following table. The materials were categorized into software, hardware, and other; Software was by far the most frequently used type of instructional material.

TABLE 22

UTILIZATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

	No.	Percentage
Software		
Films/Filmstrips	2	9.50
Kits	2	9.50
Skill Materials	5	23.80
Textbooks	2	9.50
Workbooks	2	9.50
Hardware		
Rate Machines (controlled readers, etc.)	6	28.60
Other		
Library	1	4.80
Teacher-Made	1	4.80
Total	21	100.00

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The data collection from the vocational reading instructors points to various factors that lead to the following conclusive statements.

1. The reading instructors have varied amounts of educational training and preparation; approximately 64 percent of the reading teachers have master's degrees.

2. The largest percentage of reading instructors who have master's degrees have these degrees in reading.

3. The largest percentage of the reading teachers have from 40-99 students enrolled in reading.

4. Sixty percent of the reading teachers felt that vocational students and academic students should be separated in the reading program.

5. The most prevalent methods of selecting students for reading instruction were pre-testing and instructor request based upon class performance.

6. Approximately 53 percent of the reading instructors indicated that students' reading was discussed with the vocational or technical instructor on an irregular basis; approximately 18 percent of the reading instructors held weekly conferences with these instructors concerning the students' reading.

7. The reading levels of the vocational and technical students included in the study was approximated by the reading teachers to range from grades 1-14.

8. The two subject areas that appeared to profit most from reading instruction in the opinions of the reading instructors were Auto Mechanics (33.33%) and Electronics Technology (16.66%).

9. A general reading achievement test was the type of test that was most often administered to vocational/technical students by the reading instructors.

10. The reading tests were generally utilized on a pre- and post-testing basis as a method to determine entry and exit grade achievement levels.

11. Approximately 55 percent of the reading instructors indicated that they utilized commercially prepared vocational/technical materials in the teaching of reading. Whereas, less than 6 percent employed teacher-made materials.

12. The majority of the reading instructors (76%) indicated that textbooks were the main instructional sources utilized in the teaching of reading.

13. There is no consistency in the scheduling of visual and/or auditory acuity tests for vocational and technical students in reading programs.

14. A large percentage (60%) of the reading instructors indicated that improvements in the teaching of reading could be brought about if a larger variety of materials and media were available in vocational and technical education and reading.

15. The amount of funds available from year to year for reading instructional materials appeared to be inconsistent.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR READING INSTRUCTORS

VOCATIONAL READING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Questionnaire for Reading Instructors

Please read the questions carefully, and indicate your response to each question. If a question is not applicable to you or your teaching situation, indicate this by writing "NA" beside the question. If you desire, you may add comments or explain any of your answers.

Please return by November 18, 1974.

1. Name: _____

   Sex: Male____ Female____ Junior College_____

2. Age: 25-30____ 31-40____ 41-45____ 46-50____ Over 50____

3. Number of years of experience in teaching:

   Junior College Reading_____

   Elementary School_____

   Junior High School_____

   Senior High School_____

   Other_____

4. Highest degree earned: _____

5. Major field in highest degree earned: _____

6. Other degrees earned: _____ Major: _____

7. What other responsibilities do you have in addition to the teaching of reading? _____

   _____

   _____

8. What is the total number of students that you serve in the reading program? _____

9. What is the number of Vocational/Technical students presently being served in your reading program? _____

10. Do you feel Vocational/Technical students and academic students should be separated in the reading programs? Yes____ No____ Why?_____

_____

_____

11. How do you schedule Vocational/Technical students in the reading program? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. What is the largest and smallest size class you had last year? Largest_____ Smallest_____ Number of students seen individually_____

13. How often do you confer with Vocational/Technical student's instructors about the reading problems experienced by their students? _____

_____

_____

14. Is credit given to students for your class? _____ If so, how much credit? _____ Does this credit count toward graduation? _____

15. What is the range of reading ability of Vocational/Technical students served in your program? _____

16. Which occupational group of Vocational/Technical students profits most in your program? _____ Which group profits least, and why? _____

_____

17. List reading tests administered to Vocational/Technical students in your classes and indicate when administered and by whom. _____

_____

_____

_____

18. Do you use materials drawn from vocational and technical courses pursued by your students? ____ Please list these.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

19. Do you use vocabulary lists drawn from content of vocational/technical programs pursued by your students? _____

20. If so, from which programs do you draw these lists? (Please attach lists to this questionnaire) _____

_____

21. Do you administer visual and auditory acuity tests? _____
If so, what instruments do you use? _____

_____

22. Approximately what number of uncorrected problems was detected last year? Visual_____ Auditory_____

23. What are your suggestions and/or needs in program improvement for Vocational/Technical students in reading? _____

_____

_____

_____

24. Approximately how much money did you have for purchasing materials designed for Vocational/Technical students:

1970-71_____ 1972-73_____

1971-72_____ 1973-74_____

25. What materials do you use with your Vocational/Technical students? Please list: (Omit items used only occassionally)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

APPENDIX B

RESPONSIBILITIES OF READING TEACHERS OTHER THAN READING INSTRUCTION

RESPONSIBILITIES OF READING TEACHERS
OTHER THAN READING INSTRUCTION

Responsibility	No.
Air Conditioning	1
Human Growth and Development	1
Marriage and Family Life	1
Psychology	1
Social Studies	1
Freshman Composition	2
Reading	3
Remedial Studies	3
Student Services (Advisory)	3
English	7
Mathematics	8
Miscellaneous	8

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